

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CU-04 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 NIC-01 IO-14 DRC-01

AID-20 DPW-01 /160 W

----- 015654

R 301128Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4758

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

CINCPAC

COMUSSAG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PHNOM PENH 1441

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS CB

SUBJECT: MORE ON STUDENT AND TEACHER PROTESTS

REF A. PHNOM PENH 1119

B. PHNOM PENH 1369

1. SUMMARY: THE GKR STEPPED - UP ITS CAMPAIGN TO DESTROY
RADICAL UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT LOCH
SOEUN, WHO HAS BACKPEDALED FROM HIS JANUARY 16 POSITION,
AS PRO-GOVERNMENT STUDENTS URGE LON NOL TO CONTINUE AND
SUPPORTED REPUBLICAN INSTITUTIONS. PRIME MINISTER LONG
BORET SPENT THREE HOURS WITH THE UNIVERSITY STUDENT
ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP IN A RELATIVELY AMENABLE REVIEW OF
ISSUES BUT WE EXPECT THAT RADICALS TO CONTINUE TO FLOG
THE GKR ON REOPENING SCHOOLS, OPPOSITION TO A STUDENT
RESERVE AND PERMITTING THE STUDENT BULLETIN TO PUBLISH.
TEACHERS ARE COMPARATIVELY QUIET. END SUMMARY

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2. GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED ATTACKS ON RADICAL UNIVERSITY

STUDENT ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT LOCH HOEUN INCREASED AS INFORMATION MINISTER TRINH HOANH TARRERED THE STUDENT LEADER WITH THE COMMUNIST BRUSH DURING A JANUARY 26 PRESS CONFERENCE. HE NOTED THAT POLICE ARRESTED SOEUN IN COMPANY WITH A STUDENT ACTIVIST WHO LATER FLED TO THE BUSH LAST MARCH, THAT THE TWO CARRIED COMMUNIST DOCUMENTS AND THAT LOCH SOEUN CONFESSED TO PRO-COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES AT THE TIME. RATHER THAN TRY HIM, THE GKR FREED HIM TO SHOW ITS GOOD WILL, TRINH HOANH ADDED. PRO-GOVERNMENT FRENCH LANGUAGE DAILY, LE REPUBLICAIN PICKED UP THE THEME, BUT DISMISSED LOCH SOEUN AS HAVING NOW BEEN ABANDONED BY HIS COMRADES. ON JANUARY 29 PRIME MINISTER LONG BORET REAFFIRMED THAT THE GKR WOULD KEEP UP ITS ANTI-LOCH SOEUN PROSELYTIZING UNTIL HIS ORGANIZATION DISAVOWS HIM.

3. A GROUP OF 100 PRO-GOVERNMENT STUDENTS DEMONSTRATED THEIR OPPOSITION TO INDOCHINESE COMMUNISM AT THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ON JANUARY 25. THEY LATER MET WITH MARSHAL LONG BORET AND PASSED ON AN OPEN LETTER URGING THE MARSHAL TO STAY IN PLACE TO CONTINUE THE FIGHT AGAINST THE INDOCHINESE COMMUNISTS ON ONE HAND AND CORRUPTION IN THE REPUBLIC ON THE OTHER. A SEPARATE MOTION ADDED THEIR SUPPORT FOR REPUBLICAN INSTITUTIONS AND, IN A THINLY VEILED REFERENCE TO LOCH SOEUN'S ACTIVITIES, THEIR DESIRE TO ELIMINATE "INDOCHINESE COMMUNISTS IN PHNOM PENH."

4. AS FOR LOCH SOEUN HIMSELF, HE BACKPEDALED IN A JAN 25 PRESS CONFERENCE POINTING OUT THAT HIS ORGANIZATION DID NOT OPPOSE REPUBLICAN INSTITUTIONS BUT RATHER THE MANNER OF IMPLEMENTING THESE INSTITUTIONS. HE NOTED THAT BOTH THE REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRATIC PARTIES MADE THE SAME CHARGES WHEN THEY REFUSED TO CONTEST THE 1972 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS.

5. PRIME MINISTER LONG BORET MET WITH 22 MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION CENTRAL COMMITTEE INCLUDING LOCH SOEUN ON JAN 28. HE TOLD US THAT THE STUDENT ASSUMED A POLITE AND RELATIVELY REASONABLE DEMEANOR IN CONTRAST TO THE VIRULENT POSTURE THEY ADOPTED IN EARLIER CONFRONTATIONS WITH MINISTRY OF EDUCATION OFFICIALS. IN RESPONSE TO A

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REITERATION OF ASSOCIATION'S DEMANDS, LONG BORET STATED: (A) SCHOOLS REMAIN CLOSED UNTIL THE SECURITY SITUATION WILL PERMIT THEM TO REOPEN; (B) THE STUDENT BULLETIN MAY NOT PUBLISH BUT STUDENTS ARE FREE TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS TO HIM AT ANY TIME; (C) HE WILL PRESENT THEIR OPPOSITION TO MILITARY TRAINING FOR STUDENTS TO THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, WHICH ALONE CAN AMEND THE DECREE ESTABLISHING THIS PROGRAM; (D) THE GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED

TO GIVE ONE OF THE NOTORIOUS EMBEZZLER YIN KHENG'S VILLAS
TO THE STUDENT ASSOCIATION FOR ITS HEADQUARTERS AND WILL
PROVIDE 25,000 RIELS/MONTH FOR THE ASSOCIATION EXPENSES;
(E) HE WILL DISCUSS WITH THE NATIONAL BANK PROVISION OF
A SPECIAL SUBSIDIZED EXCHANGE RATE FOR FOREIGN BOOKS AND
EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS; (F) THE FINANCIAL SITUATION DOES
NOT PERMIT INCREASING FUNDS FOR SCHOLARSHIPS.

6. RADICAL STUDENT ORGANIZATIONAL EFFORTS AND ACTIVITIES
ARE CONTINUING. ON JANUARY 27 LYCEE AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS
APPROVED THE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF A UNITED ORGANIZATION
OF KHMER YOUTH PRESENTED BY LAW FACULTY PRESIDENT NGUON
KIM SENG, BUT THE LEADERS OF THIS UMBRELLA ORGNIZATION
ARE YET TO BE CHOSEN. THE NEXT ITEM ON THE AGENDA OF THE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PHNOM PENH 1441

NATIONAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION IS THE PUBLICATION OF A STATE-
MENT ON THE PROBLEM OF PEACE. WE UNDERSTAND THAT RADICALS
LED BY THE ASSOCIATION'S PRESIDENT LOCH SOEUN ARE MEETING
SOME OPPOSITION ON THIS ISSUE FROM MODERATES. THE LATTER
APPARENTLY INCLUDE THE ASSOCIATION'S SECRETARY GENERAL

KHUNTON THANARAK, WHO PRIME MINISTER LONG BORET BELIVES WILL COOPERATE WITH THE GOVERNMENT. LOCH SOEUN TOLD THE EMBASSY'S LOCAL POLITICAL ASSISTANT THAT SEVERAL MORE MEETINGS WILL BE REQUIRED TO APPROVE THE PEACE STATEMENT. THE BAN ON PUBLIC MEETINGS MAY THEREFORE NIP THIS INITIATIVE IN THE BUD.

7. THE TEACHER'S ASSOCIATIONS HAVE NOT YET REACTED TO LONG BORET'S RESPONSE TO THEIR DEMANDS (REF B). SOME 30 PROFESSORS AT PHNOM PENH'S LARGEST LYCEE, HOWEVER, PUBLICLY REJECTED THE GOVERNMENT'S INCREASE IN THEIR COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE AND REITERATED THEIR DETERMINATION TO STRIKE UNTIL THEIR GRIEVANCES ARE MET.

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8. COMMENT: STUDENT RADICALS AND TEACHERS GROUPS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY FIND WAYS TO VENT THEIR VIEWS DESPITE THE LATEST GOVERNMENTAL RESTRICTIONS ON PUBLICATIONS AND ASSEMBLY. BUT TENSIONS APPEAR TO BE LESS THIS WEEK AND AS LONG AS ENEMY MILITARY ACTIVITY AGAINST THE CITY CONTINUES AT THE CURRENT LEVEL AND THE GKR CONTINUES TO PLAY THE MATTER COOL, THE RADICALS SHOULD NOT BE ABLE TO GARNER THE SUPPORT NECESSARY TO THREATEN SERIOUSLY THE LONG BORET GOVERNMENT.
ENDERS

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